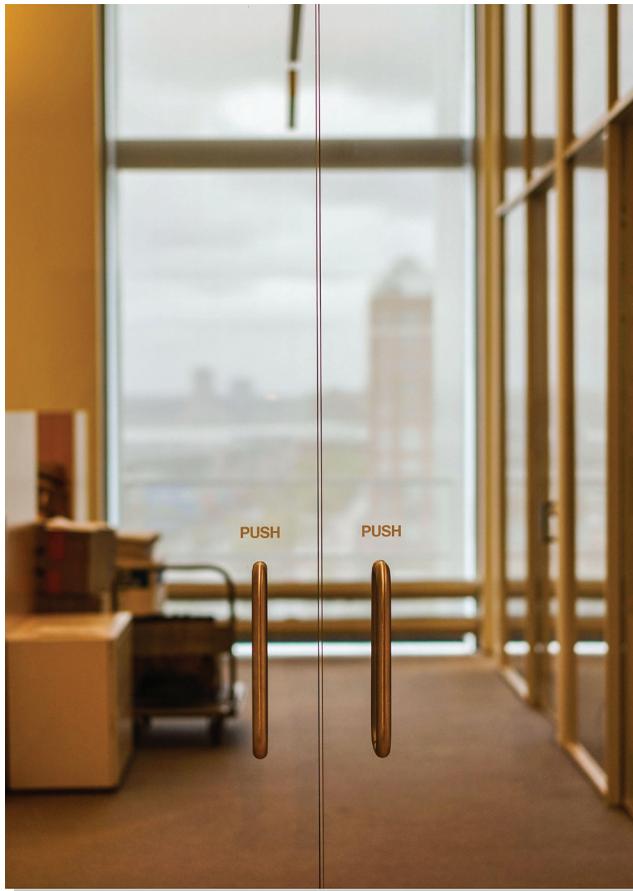


# POETIC CURRENCY

A DOSSIER



EDITED BY

Adriana X. Jacobs

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**THREE POEMS**

*by Nachoem M. Wijnberg*

*Translated from the Dutch by David Colmer*

## If you want to explain something you can start here

You keep shoes in which you can no longer  
walk properly, that's against something,  
isn't it?

You receive an invitation  
and say that you will come on foot,  
and then you look for a pair  
of those shoes  
and you have plenty to choose from,  
because you have so many  
of them.

Halfway you realize  
that you have forgotten to take  
what you wanted to show them  
and that is why you make  
something that doesn't even  
show how hastily  
it was made.

If you want to explain something about money  
begin with: money is  
for trading and saving,  
and then ask,  
as if you can put your hand up if you want to answer,  
what else can you do that with,  
both those things?

Putting up your hand  
is like deciding whether to walk on  
if what you have heard  
is a price,  
and hoping you'll have something left later,  
when you no longer know what you can quickly make from what  
you can see.

## State and market

If you are the highest representative  
of the state  
you walk across the market.

Where too little is being sold,  
you buy what is left  
before the wholesalers  
make a low offer  
when the day is almost over.

Or you offer loans  
at an interest rate that is lower  
than the banks are asking,  
so the sellers can wait a day longer,  
the state will earn money then too.

You start selling  
what you have bought from them  
when the prices have started rising  
as if people are expecting  
them to go up even further.

And if they themselves still have  
what they can sell for those higher prices  
you let them pay off their debts.

Remember, it's also your job  
to keep fear and pity  
apart.

## Representative

You do not need  
to work for a factory,  
you can also be a representative  
with your own business,  
you know what that is, don't you?

A suitcase in each hand  
with samples  
of what you can produce in your factories.

You make each profit four times:  
when the customer orders,  
when it's delivered,  
when the customer pays,  
when you get your commission.

You earn little,  
then a lot,  
but at the end of the year  
you only need to worry about your factories and customers,  
not about what your boss might think.

You have known your customers for so long,  
they will be sure to pay.

It's not going well,  
your customers say,  
maybe it would be better  
if you slowed down a little,  
and on business trips  
only *ate* in grand hotels,  
sleeping somewhere else.

☞ **TRANSLATOR'S NOTE** Besides being a novelist and a highly prolific poet, Nachoem M. Wijnberg is also a professor at the University of Amsterdam Business School. Wijnberg adopts a different form and subject for each of his volumes of poetry, and in his recent collection, *Van Groot Belang* (2015), from which the poems above are drawn, the poet turns particular attention to politics and history, along with specific economic issues such as money supply and taxation systems. In contrast to most social or politically-engaged poetry, the poems in this collection are investigations rather than statements of a position. Rather, the poet invites the reader to join him as he tries to learn more about his "unpoetic" themes. My translations will appear in the collection *Of Great Importance*, which will be published by Punctum Books in 2018.

## Midnight

*By Rudra Muhammad Shahidullah*

*Translated from the Bengali by Mohammad Shafiqul Islam*

Two girls return at midnight.  
 Unable to walk, they feel fatigue in blood,  
 their bodies dispense different smells —  
 Ma, open the door, my beloved Ma...

Distant ships blow whistles,  
 the old moon shines in the sky,  
 still beautiful,  
 still the flow tide  
 keeps alluvial love in croplands.  
 Only it smells briny at nights — merciless stomachs,  
 unfamiliar doors every day —  
 Ma, open the door, my beloved Ma...

Starvation and darkness prevail outside.  
 Dustbins shine —  
 the great role of civilization.  
 Bones of thousands of underfed children  
 play atomic flutes in a sweet tune.  
 In exchange of people's untimely deaths,  
 spaceships run towards distant planets —  
 Ma, open the door, my beloved Ma...

The two girls return at midnight, the boy doesn't —  
 at colorful nights, gratifications swell up  
 in magnificent city quarters,  
 how easily bright faces become scary!

Blood-soaked powerful hands with pus,  
 and wounds full of microbes  
 tinge all flowers of life —  
 Ma, open the door, my beloved Ma...

With plough strokes,  
hunger sprouts up from lands,  
garment factories collapse — like ripe apples,  
days are uncertain in workers' rusty hands.

Innumerable sick claws pounce on food,  
but the color of sunshine is still the same — the sun rises,  
air brings nature's untainted fragrances,  
countless papers admire civilization every day.

From *Moulik Mukhosh* (The Original Mask, 1990)

## 25

*By Shahram Sheydayi*

*Translated from the Persian by Lida Nosrati*

Still, through that one door left open  
People come and go

Still, ads and sales  
Remind the eyes of that 'rare opportunity'  
Still members of parliament, presidents, and the capital behind them  
Find new ways to bring  
Old men and women to the polls  
How everything is taken seriously  
    How wonderful that still, people keep themselves busy  
    How nice that still, people find things serious enough to keep going  
    How nice that still, people sleep with these thoughts  
    Wake up with them, with no time to see the empty hind of life

My time though has long been unbound  
Like a nightmare, everything rolls before my eyes  
Shop windows, streets, cities, airports, gardens, companies, stores  
And sometimes, even children

It's awful  
I keep telling myself I have no right to spread the right of cynicism  
That I should only keep it to myself  
I keep telling myself that poetry, art and letters  
Commit the worst atrocities  
People are busy laughing, crying, sleeping, and waking up  
And literature intrudes, wakes them up from the sweet nap of life  
It makes them lose their intent  
This should be classified among the most brutal acts of torture  
This sacredness syndrome of writers, poets and intellectuals  
I keep warning myself that writers are traitors  
That it's about time they shut up  
That literature deceives people and throws them into an abyss  
With no hope of return  
People have worked hard to be busy  
To forget what has gone on and is going on  
To just keep going  
And to sometimes vote or not vote  
This has all been mapped, it's no joke  
I said the cashiers in the store are so rude

My Iranian friend's panic-induced sorrow:  
*'No, no, don't be so quick to judge. It's the rule of time and the system  
 They often have to wear adult diapers to pee in.'*

Let me assure you I'm not planning to go communist on you  
 And I know you understand capital, labor and exploitation much better than I do  
 I'm just telling myself that if those cashiers decided to read  
 What I write  
 They'll lose their job, and that's unjust

Literature is dark  
 And I feel bad for that dear cashier who cannot take a break in it

That's not fair!  
 But what is?  
 Idiot!  
 I keep telling myself that visible and invisible wheels of filth-wealth  
 Drove our breed of writers extinct  
 And persevering is pointless.

From *Kalagh-e Sefid* (A Stone for Life, A Stone for Death, 2013)

## A Poor Christian Looks at the Peggy Sage Salon

By Jacek Dehnel

*Translated from the Polish by Karen Kovacic*

From across the street all you can see is color:  
 an intense, orange-coral light in the windows  
 tinting the granite arcades of a bygone era.  
 It's two in the morning on Świętokrzyska:

a sheenless, deserted river of clotted basalt.

Closer in, the black lettering turns lavender:  
 MANICURE STYLIST TAROT Behind the signage  
 in the lamplight's fleshy glow, the interior boldly  
 reveals its night-time order: hairdryers on hooks,  
 tubes, sprays, and polishes with shimmery flecks  
 of seaweed, jojoba, vanilla, and green tea,  
 emulsions of salt, clay and mud prepared with pure  
 spring water — all doubled flawlessly in rows  
 of mirrors. Gorgeous people in gorgeous photos  
 (at the shore, posed in sun and wind) look so natural  
 you hardly see them.

A church, cinema, and bank  
 are nearby: opposite, a few doors down, set back,  
 to the right and the left. But only through this glass  
 does that warm, pink light beckon so lovingly:  
*Come, you who suffer, and all signs of fatigue,  
 pain, ugliness, age, and stress will pass from you.*  
 Higher up, in a trembling nimbus of flashing dots,  
 shines some cryptic neon devoted to slim,  
 alluring gods: MEN'S STYLIST FOR WOMEN.

*Warsaw, 10–12 January, 2005*

☞ **TRANSLATOR'S NOTE** Jacek Dehnel's "A Poor Christian Looks at the Peggy Sage Salon" is a response to "A Poor Christian Looks at the Ghetto," Czesław Miłosz's well-known poem about the burning of the Warsaw district after the Jewish uprising in 1943. While the earlier poem is a *cri de coeur*, in which the speaker fears judgment as a mere bystander to the Ghetto's burning, Dehnel's poem chronicles a more minor apocalypse: the advent of globalization after the fall of Communism. Describing a glitzy salon on Świętokrzyska [Holy Cross] Street, a thoroughfare in central Warsaw, known for its

massive, Soviet-style architecture, his poem dwells on the architectural eclecticism, where socialist-realist buildings abut foreign banks and fast-food franchises. To Poles who grew up under Communism when western goods were hard to come by and travel outside Poland was often impossible, the incursion of global capital meant a life-altering change. The elevated diction of Dehnel's poem lampoons the language of advertising—the near supernatural claims for some lotions, creams, and shampoos.

Dehnel is known for writing about contemporary subject matter in traditional rhythms and forms. Here he uses the classical thirteen-syllable line, which I've modified to variable syllabics, each line between ten and twelve syllables. To me, this supple, yet measured line helps convey the poem's ironies: the contrast between the heavy, postwar buildings and this colorful salon, the Christ-like beckoning of the beauty products, and even the mysterious gendered phrase that closes the poem: "MEN'S STYLIST FOR WOMEN."

## O, My Bank

By Tahel Frosh

Translated from the Hebrew by Yosefa Raz

O my bank fuck me you know you want to fuck me good and you don't want any tycoon, no tycoon, no, yeah yeah yeah, oh my bank you want to fuck me good and no tycoon will do, no, with the tycoon you have lunch at Eyal Shani's, and you eat shrimps in happy sauce, but with me you have fireworks and desires and there is lots of Thanatos and that is, as you know, as far as life stretches

O my brothers! Ignore me for whom do I toil writing poem for whom for whom, for whom my eaters at the fancy restaurants of chef Eyal Shani holding hands with married fingers that sign work papers you bear the weight of the entire economy on your shoulders O on the way to the demonstration against the tycoons and their platonic relations with the bank I see you at the tapas bar eating Latin food and my flesh is empty, and the sign I am carrying stays standing like a dick on Viagra, you are my catastrophe on the way to the demonstration against the war

O you! O you who want to make money O you who want to get rich and you who want to pay and you who want to eat and then create suffering on fancy sports bikes, and you who wear a buttoned shirt and you who wear a suit and you whose career is rising like a meteor and you who get written about and you who get excited before entering First Class and you who love white marble with veins, and you who know what the money is doing and stay silent

O my bank fuck me I'll do a suicide bombing in the lobby after I whisper *'s-emek ars* and nothing happens fuck me retroactively with a five-year payment plan with signed documents and then I will go out into the sunlight into the street after a rape that is not recognized by the authorities O! No policewoman is going to come save me and not any women's organization and not the peace organizations and not the society for animals in distress

From *Betsa* (Avarice, 2014)

## The Executive Fishing Workshop

By Roy Chicky Arad

Translated from the Hebrew by Yosefa Raz

Three major CEOs on a fishing expedition to Tiberius  
 caught the same fish.  
 Its body is now lying  
 on the cobblestone promenade,  
 attached to three hooks:  
 the failure of the workshop  
 for leadership-through-sport.  
 The three CEOs are helpless,  
 near the big cold dead fish, whose gills are torn.

A fourteen-year-old walks by, almost touching,  
 his clothes — light-reflecting scales —  
 they're worried he'll ask questions  
 but he's in a hurry to fuck his girlfriend,  
 his cock erect in Benneton.  
 The fishing lines of the three CEOs  
 have snarled together in a nub.  
 The three are still surrounding the poor fish  
 with their rods.  
 They're not going to learn anything now!  
 They're not going to learn anything!

A group of Breslav Hasids, roaring a bit, echo in the distance,  
 one of them wearing shoes made in Israel.  
 The insurance CEO decided  
 to do something.  
 He goes up to the fish and pulls forcefully on the thread  
 to draw out the hooks, but they're stuck fast.  
 He flicks a lighter and the thin delicate threads catch fire, easily detached.  
 For a moment, a golden light is cast on the torn fish.  
 This CEO takes the dead fish  
 throws him over the stone wall, into the murk of the Sea of Galilee.  
 "He's dead anyway, why throw him into the water?"  
 one of them says,  
 while this CEO wipes his hand with the corpse of a free newspaper drifting on the  
 promenade.

**FROM MANEKINEN (MANNEQUINS)**

*By Dvoyre Fogel*

*Translated from the Yiddish by Anna Elena Torres*

**The Legend of Bank Houses**

Half-official memoranda announce:  
The gold hoard of the Federal Reserve Bank  
amounted to four billion dollars  
on the fourth day of March, nineteen hundred thirty-three.

And greater still than the value of banknotes  
were heaping handfuls of yellow gold  
worth half a billion more—O, what delight!

It happened in proud skyscrapers  
of New York, Detroit, and Chicago  
amid the classical hush  
of walls and glass and steel.

Harvests of gold lay  
like ample earth,  
like heavy bliss.

Who could believe  
how gold lays in mounds  
like crooked fat earth

if they can't touch it,  
the world crammed full with gold blood.

Then, for three long weeks  
gold ran fugitive  
out from banks and offices  
but the world requires order  
and replaced banknotes and paper  
with gold.

Seven billion dollars  
now flood the world,  
maintaining balance.

Now open wide the bank shutters!  
 Trade paper  
 for fabric,  
 for dresses and houses and potatoes  
 and the world regains its fortune.

## Legend of Gold Ships

Sometimes the sea is absent-minded cobalt  
 sometimes, melancholy ultramarine-blue

and gold is warm and tender  
 or faraway.

The ship Europa departed from Cherbourg  
 the Georgic, from Liverpool  
 and one mad ship called the Manhattan.

Ships transport gold over seas  
 round as life's monotony  
 round pieces of splendor and joy.

Later, in bank-houses and offices  
 heaps of sweet yearning lie  
 in the New York Federal Reserve Bank  
 in the Union Bank in London and Madrid:  
 fateful things and fortunes  
 and the joy of the world: This happened...

If there were no gold throughout the world  
 one should spread it  
 as signs of life and joy

The sea is cobalt  
 the sea is ultramarine blue  
 shipments of gold pass over the sea

like oranges, like herring ships  
nobody knows these shipments of gold  
anonymous and fateful.

Why transport gold in crates  
our longing and our joy  
not by open sails  
solitary and proud as legends...

## Legend of Silver

Silver is a resigned metal  
silver is gentle and provisional  
like pearl-gray weary dusks.

Silver is indifferent  
and so quite lonesome  
like someone who no longer believes in anything,  
who's always distant from life.

And so silver went unaccounted for  
by the world economy  
in nineteen-hundred thirty-three.

But people cannot live without money  
it buys and exchanges and sells  
the sweet utility of our lives.

Life, traded for stuff  
for dresses, shoes, potatoes  
through money.  
Who would want our life without money?

In first place stands gold:  
what other metal can compare?  
So warm, so bound up with life.  
In second place stands silver  
that indifferent material.

But proud gold was not enough  
and there was more desire in the world  
than red warm gold metal.

Thus silver lived to see  
its proud and grotesque myth:  
a piece of silver for a piece of life,  
a piece of life becomes necessary for silver  
things gain their fate thanks to silver

When finance potentates,  
big concerns, oil pits, factories  
of Fords, Deterdings and Kruegers  
offer just a wink and a wish

then even silver  
the pale, provisional body of metal  
can stumble around the world, trying its luck  
in the genre of a new legend.

☞ **TRANSLATOR'S NOTE** Dvoyre Fogel (1900–1942) was a Yiddish avant-garde poet, literary critic, and philosopher. Her style embodied a radical stillness, rejecting contemporary literary trends which valorized dynamism as the hallmark of modernity. Fogel adapted elements of Unism and Constructivism and collaborated with illustrators and typographers to develop a style she called “white words.” Fogel’s art criticism responded to the work of her circle, including Marc Chagall, Henryk Streng, who illustrated her book, and Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, who painted her portrait. The poet Melekh Ravitch describes her: “Behind every word she spoke there were at least three books that she had read. She knew several languages, all as fluently as a native tongue. Only when it came to Yiddish did she understand every nuance and speak it in a way that showed she was prepared to learn more and more, with great devotion and love.” Although famous for her romance with the Polish writer and artist Bruno Schulz, she was also his philosophical interlocutor and critical reviewer.

These three poems appear in *Manekinen* (Mannequins, 1934), a collection that renders the spaces of women’s labor and commerce — markets, bordellos, kitchens — in precise material detail. The opening stanza of “Legend of Bank Houses” references President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s closing of the banks on March 3, 1933 to prevent the public from withdrawing their money. This poem evokes Kabbalistic narratives of creation, remolded by Fogel’s ironic modernist sensibility. Rather than the breaking of the Divine Vessels, which mythologically scattered sparks of holiness throughout the world, Fogel’s legend accounts for the spread of gold into the world’s currency.

## Currency

by Nora Bossong

Translated from the German by Katie Lally

*The formula according to which things  
find their meaning through one another  
(Georg Simmel)*

Down sank the old eagle again. A second-rate Zeus.  
There went the few cents rolling over to her, tip change in the ashtray.  
The view: Hudson, fire escapes, a sleek, glass-covered  
architectural mass. New York City at noon, imprinted  
on his face, 'giving him head'. How many had he granted  
credit, ordered asylum for those Greeks in the documents, a  
couple notes marked up, it wasn't going to change the world.  
Sometimes power clutched at stubborn legs. Influence,  
sovereignty, tomorrow all rubbed out, the sheets changed.  
The only thing of value was that which remained in the end.  
And he was just an animal after all, wanting a little warmth.  
Value passed on from him to things: his pleasure, her beauty.  
He laid the coin in his mouth, pressed his jaws together,  
and shut his eyes.

 **TRANSLATOR'S NOTE** Nora Bossong's work often circles around issues of political and economic strife by turning to the emotional and sexual exchanges between human figures. "Currency," published in the *Die Zeit's* *Politik und Lyrik* (Politics and Poetry) series in 2011, is introduced as a poem about "the steep fall of a powerful man," though one may also note the state of financial crisis in Europe at the time of publication, as well as the author's meditation on meaning as value, recalling a particularly German philosophical inheritance.

## Class Struggle

By *Álvaro Lasso*

*Translated from the Spanish by Kelsi Vanada*

Don Pedro told Saint Pedro about the time a jewelry store saleswoman didn't want to assist him because he was dressed in workman's clothes. The old jeweler, noticing that the saleswoman wasn't helping him, sold him a gold chain at a special discount.

Saint Pedro told Don Pedro that this same gold had been found by a child in a stream in Madre de Dios. He used to work every morning, plunging his hands into the mud. When the child ceased to be a child, he killed his foreman.

"So you're a leftist, my name-twin," Don Pedro said.

"Could someone who guards the heavenly gates be a leftist?" Saint Pedro responded, one eyebrow raised.

Don Pedro shrugged, grabbed his newspaper, and went back to where he came from.

From *Izquierda Unida* (United Left;  
Celacanto 2015/La Bella Varsovia 2016)

## Strange/r

By Zahrad

Translated from the Armenian by Michael Pifer

those quarters of the city were foreign to Gigo  
tall, tall, the buildings foreign  
the people—the beautiful women, foreign

a girl wearing an apron came  
she placed five *kuruş* in his palm —  
strangers were the people — strange —  
Gigo had not gone out begging

 **TRANSLATOR'S NOTE** In this poem, Zahrad's recurring character, Gigo, experiences the alienation of modern life through an act of kindness gone awry. In Armenian, the multivalent word that Zahrad employs for 'foreign' and 'strange/r' is the same — *odar* — a term also colloquially used for 'non-Armenian.' The exchange between the young woman and Gigo tells us all we need to know: not only have these strangers misunderstood Gigo, who has wandered into the wealthier parts of his own city, but in their misunderstanding, they have entirely devalued his personhood. All it cost was five *kuruş* — a small coin used widely since the days of the Ottoman Empire until the 1970s in Turkey.

## The Bank of the Future

*By C. P. Cavafy*

*Translated from the Greek by Karen Van Dyck*

To make my difficult life secure  
I'll strictly limit business to the basics  
up there in the Bank of the Future.

Substantial assets I doubt exist.  
And I've begun to fear the first crisis—  
suddenly payments will cease.

(1897)

## Rate of Exchange

(from “This Rumor of Darger’s Armies of Girls”)

*By Yosefa Raz*

Hay into gold  
 Lead into gold  
 Swans into boy princes  
 IFD soldiers into hermaphroditic fairies  
 Smuggle out rumors, witness reports  
 Smuggle in cellphones, olives, sickly sweet images  
 placid pastel PTSD hysteria  
 Join the witness protection program for cities and continents  
 Depicting only the small spaces seen as prisoners:  
 the corner of a wall, the legs of a chair

American chaplains carried rolled-up Yiddish newspapers  
*Come out, come out, wherever you are*  
 Polari for puppet shows, in London fish markets  
 For circus showmen and professional wrestlers  
 Closet punning:  
 (on cookies) *I like ‘em plain*  
 (on dishes) *I like ‘em stacked*  
 Reveal and conceal  
 False eyelashes and the cosmos  
 I knew very well, but just the same  
 Weren’t these *my* memories, *my* wars?  
 Scenes of flowery nubile paradises  
 Scenes of torture and massacre  
 Hide yourself in plain sight the way you’re ashamed of your body  
 Extract the Vivian Girls like hostages  
 Transform the cut-out tracings into real girls:  
 Their funky smell  
 Their worn leather jacket  
 How far they can spit in every direction

He disrobes her  
 To know what lies beneath the surface  
 The act of tracing unlocks secrets of girlhood  
 Vivian is vivacious is vivid is vital  
 Failed attempt to create the divine body  
*Close us. Destroy our mouths. Enter.*  
*Torture us in other realities.*

Gathering trash, clipping newspapers  
 Winding together long balls of twine  
 Taking daily notes on the weather report  
 Transcribing the Bible over hundreds of pages

Economical transformations of the original sources  
 Into something less stable or clear  
 Girls gone feral

You opened with a word  
 But fell through the floor into a lingering darkness

☞ **NOTES & RUMORS** Henry Darger, a reclusive and eccentric janitor and dishwasher, spent the first decades of the twentieth century composing and illustrating a fantasy novel spanning over 15,000 typed pages, which he called, *The Story of the Vivian Girls, in What is Known as the Realms of the Unreal, of the Glandeco-Angelinian War Storm, Caused by the Child Slave Rebellion*. “Placid, pastel, PTSD hysteria,” is quoted in a letter from Kevin Killian. “Close us. Destroy our mouths. Enter. Torture us in other realities,” is from *Style/Estilio* by Dolores Dorantes, translated by Jen Hofer. “Failed attempt to create the divine body” is Gershom Scholem via Sara Larsen’s *Merry Hell*. “You opened with a word,” refers to the *ptichta*, common to rabbinic midrash, and echoes a Hasidic story in which a rabbi begins to explain the story of the rebellious Korach to his students, and the students magically find themselves falling through the opened ground, as Korach fell.

## From “Great Transactions”

*By Ursula Andkjær Olsen*

*Translated from the Danish by Katrine Øgaard Jensen*

Here  
it flows.

Here, everyone  
makes someone else’s money.  
That is the exposed structure.

*Transactions with no voice.*  
*Transactions with two tongues.*  
*Transactions with eternal life.*

\*

All desires are false desires, paradoxes, jubilation, a surplus that starts to flow when you, I, come into mouthservice and culture’s yellow, blue and green dreams light up in their squares.

\*

Truth and justice, I want to cut  
their hearts out  
carefully, and use them as earrings; I’ll be all dressed up.

I’ll run out on the arc of life and buy my way into luxury.

\*

I sink my teeth as I please into  
desert and forest.

I won’t feel sorry for you when you don’t get yours, I will rejoice  
my new ruthlessness.

\*

*Your money up in my ass.*

\*

The fact that every: you can be bought, is a humiliation,  
every: you are for sale, is a humiliation. You can  
always smell them, even though everyone here  
sells themselves. With gratitude.

I am a rocking horse. Hitch me to your wagon.

From *Third-Millennium Heart* (Action Books, 2017)

## Riddle 83

*Translated from the Anglo-Saxon by Bertha Rogers*

Old is my race,      too many winters  
 have I endured.      I stayed in cities  
 after men found me,      and their fire  
 first cleansed me.      Now I abide  
 in a grim realm,      my earthly brother,  
 my ward,      author of my sorrow,  
 always watching,      confining me.  
 He ripped me      from our rock-home —  
 all my kind.      I cannot harm him,  
 but round Middle-Earth,      with my might,  
 I am his path      to sin and slavery.  
 I must hide, from all,      my secret skills,  
 my power, my tracks.      Speak what I am.

[The answer to the riddle is under “Anonymous” in the contributors’ page.]

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Anonymous.** The 95 Anglo-Saxon Riddle-Poems in the *Exeter Book* were written down during the 10th century and given to Exeter Cathedral by Bishop Leofric, where the book remains today. They address diverse topics, both secular and religious. Riddle 83 is concerned with money and wealth, a topic that continues, through the centuries, to fascinate poets and lay people alike.



**Roy 'Chicky' Arad** is the author of several collections of poetry, most recently *Noset ha-metosim* (The Aircraft Carrier, Maayan, 2014). In 2005, he founded the arts and poetry journal *Maayan*, which remains in print today, and was one of the founding members of the art and social justice collective Guerrilla Culture.



**Nora Bossong** has been lauded in the contemporary German literary world for her poetry, essays, and novels, the first of which debuted in 2006. She lives in Berlin.



**C. P. Cavafy** lived in Alexandria, Egypt (1863–1933) and is widely considered the most distinguished Greek poet of the twentieth century. His canon consists of 154 poems acknowledged during his lifetime, while the Repudiated (37), the Unfinished (30), and the Hidden poems (75, including this one), were only published much later.



**David Colmer** is an Australian translator of Dutch-language fiction and poetry. His translations include three volumes of Nachoem M. Wijnberg's poetry.



**Jacek Dehnel**, born in 1980, is a poet, novelist and translator. In 2005, he was one of the youngest winners of the Kościelski Prize for promising new writers. In 2018, *Aperture*, a poetry collection translated by Karen Kovacik (Zephyr Press), will be published in English, as will the novel *Lala*, translated by Antonia Lloyd-Jones (Oneworld Publications).



**Dvoyre Fogel** (1902–1942) was born in Burshteyn (now in Ukraine) and raised in a Polish-speaking home. Fogel spoke several languages but chose Yiddish for her experimental compositions, publishing two books of Yiddish poetry *Tog-figurn* (Day-figures, 1930) and *Manekinen* (Mannequins, 1934) and a book of montages, *Akatsies blien* (Acacias Bloom, 1935), which she translated into Polish herself.



**Tahel Frosh's** debut poetry collection *Betsa* (Avarice, Bialik Institute Press, 2015) was published in 2014 to wide acclaim. She also co-edited the anthology *Avodat gilui* (Unveiling Work, Guerrilla Culture, 2013) and is a member of the art and social justice collective Guerilla Culture. She is currently working on a doctorate in literature at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.



**Mohammad Shafiqul Islam** is the author of three books: *Wings of Winds* (Poetry, 2015), *Humayun Ahmed: Selected Short Stories* (Translation, 2016) and *Aphorisms of Humayun Azad* (Translation, 2017). His poetry and translation have appeared or are forthcoming in *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, *Poem*, *Critical Survey*, *Light*, *SNReview*, *Reckoning*, *Arts & Letters*, *Bengal Lights*, and elsewhere. He is a PhD candidate in the Department of English, Assam University, India, and teaches English at Shahjalal University of Science & Technology, Sylhet, Bangladesh.



**Katrine Øgaard Jensen's** work has appeared in the *Columbia Journal*, *The Washington Square Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Arc Poetry Magazine*, *Asymptote*, and elsewhere.



**Karen Kovacik** is a translator of contemporary Polish poetry. Her publications include her translation of Agnieszka Kuciak's *Distant Lands: An Anthology of Poets Who Don't Exist* (White Pine, 2013) and the edited volume *Scattering the Dark*, an anthology of Polish women poets (White Pine, 2016). In 2011, she was awarded a fellowship in literary translation from the National Endowment for the Arts. She is the author of the poetry collections *Metropolis Burning* (Cleveland State, 2005), *Beyond the Velvet Curtain* (Kent State, 1999), and *Nixon and I* (Kent State, 1998).



**Katie Lally** is a doctoral candidate at the University of California, Santa Cruz, working primarily on Jewish diasporic and German-language literature of the 19th and 20th centuries. She is currently completing a dissertation on the literary and philosophical importance of the little-known psychoanalyst Victor Tausk.



**Álvaro Lasso** was born in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, in 1982. He is the founder and editor of Estruendomudo, one of the most important independent publishing companies in Latin America since 2004. Lasso has published *Dos niñas de Egon Schiele* [Egon Schiele's Girls, 2006], *The Astrud Gilberto Album* (2010), and *Izquierda Unida* [United Left, 2015/2016].



**Lida Nosrati** is a literary translator. She lives in Toronto.



**Ursula Andkjær Olsen** is the author of nine collections of poetry, one novel, and several dramatic texts and libretti for operas.



**Michael Pifer** is Lecturer of Armenian Language and Literature at the University of Michigan. He is co-editor of *An Armenian Mediterranean: Words and Worlds in Motion* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).



**Yosefa Raz's** poems, translations, stories and essays have appeared in *Jacket2*, *Guernica*, *World Literature Today*, *ZYZZYVA*, *Lilith*, *Tikkun*, *Glimmer Train*, and *Entropy*. Together with Adriana X. Jacobs, she translated poetry for *Women's Hebrew Poetry on American Shores*. She is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at Haifa University, where she teaches and thinks about prophecy, outsider art, and the poetics of American bodies.



**Bertha Rogers** is a poet, translator, and visual artist. Her translation of *Beowulf* was published in 2000; and her translations and illuminations of the Anglo-Saxon Riddle-Poems from the Exeter Book have been published in literary journals and anthologies, including the recent *Translating Early Medieval Poetry: Transformation, Reception, Interpretation* (Boydell and Brewer, 2017).



**Rudra Muhammad Shahidullah**, an acclaimed poet of Bengali literature, was born in Bagerhat, Bangladesh, in 1956. His poems are widely read by Bengali readers around the world. Romantic and revolutionary, as well as modern, Rudra is very popular, especially among the young generation of readers. He passed away in 1992.



**Shahram Sheydayi** (1967–2009) was an Iranian poet, writer, lexicographer, and translator.



**Anna Elena Torres** is a Postdoctoral Scholar in the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Chicago. She is currently translating Dvovre Fogel's poetry collection *Manekinen* (Mannequins, 1934).



**Kelsi Vanada** holds MFAs in Poetry (Iowa Writers' Workshop, 2016) and Literary Translation (University of Iowa, 2017). She translates from Spanish and Swedish, and her poems and translations have been published most recently in *Columbia Poetry Review*, *EuropeNow*, *Asymptote*, and *Prelude*. Her first full-length translation, *The Eligible Age* by Berta García Faet, is forthcoming from Song Bridge Press.



**Karen Van Dyck** is Kimon A. Doukas Professor of Modern Greek Literature in the Classics Department at Columbia University. Her most recent anthology of translations *Austerity Measures: New Greek Poetry* (Penguin 2016) won the London Hellenic Prize.



**Nachoem M. Wijnberg** is the 2018 winner of the P.C. Hooft prize, the Dutch state award for a body of literary work, which is awarded to a poet once every three years. Wijnberg has two poetry books in English: *Advance Payment* (Carcenet, 2013) and *Divan of Ghalib* (White Pine Press, 2016), with a third forthcoming, *Of Great Importance* (Punctum, 2018).



**Zahrad** (1924–2007) was a prominent Armenian poet who lived in Istanbul.